Marching On

What I've been up this month...

TIM FOLEY
MAR 18, 2025

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I’m recovering from my second flu-y thing of 2025. Most disagreeable. I’m now wrapped in a blanket and blinking at the sunlight. This is how I tend to operate as a freelance writer, so business as usual.

Coulda Shoulda Driftwooda

The tour of DRIFTWOOD is entering its final week! Leeds on the 18th (tonight) and 19th (tomorrow), and then Manchester homecoming on the 20th and 21st. If you haven’t seen it yet, this is your last chance. We’ve had the most incredible tour - sell-out runs, gorgeous audiences. The Guardian even called me a “striking talent”, we’ll be

chiseling that into my gravestone.

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I'm lucky to be diving into an R&D for a future play just a week after this one closes, because I am always susceptible to the Post-Show Blues. That's the dark side to theatre's ephemera - the joy and the buzz and the community vanish overnight. So if you see me at a show this week, be kind and gentle. And feel free to buy me a chocolate bar.

But a splinter of DRIFTWOOD can forever remain in your grasp - by which I mean the play-text. If you haven't picked it up yet, you can order it here. All sales fund my well-being.

Ghost Show Discussion

As I mentioned last missive, an upcoming theatre show of mine is of a decidedly spooky nature. Whilst I scribbled away on the first draft, I treated myself to various horror shows for research. Manchester has had a good glut of them lately - I saw GHOST STORIES at The Lowry a few weeks back, a fantastic night that had the audience gasping and swearing. And then just this weekend I caught Robert Lloyd Parry in his well-known M.R. James one-man show at Levenshulme Old Library. Both productions are of a completely different scale (one had a car on-stage being attacked, another is a guy in a chair), but they both tapped into the fundamental eeriness that ghost stories can provide.

Talking of scale - it was interesting to read Jeremy Dyson and Andy Nyman's introduction to the GHOST STORIES play-text. It was originally conceived as a smaller, VAGINA MONOLOGUES-esque show; "three men sitting on three stools telling ghost stories". Sometimes less is more - Parry's performance was a perfect example of that. But then, considering the big-budget blockbuster that Dyson and Nyman ended up making... sometimes more is more too...

When you write a first draft, there are all sorts of questions rattling around in my head (what am I doing, does this make sense, what am I trying to say) - and sometimes you're trying to answer them, and sometimes you're just ignoring them so they don't get in the way. This time, I had a new question pinging around: *how do I make this as scary as possible?* See, I don't just want a ghost story, I want a HORROR story. We have to craft something that's possible to stage and tour, and yet within those parameters I want impossible frights scattered through the show. I want those gasps and swears as well. I think I have a few tricks up my sleeve, which we'll hone in the weeks and months to come… but for now, I've hit my first draft deadline, so the haunting has officially commenced.

And when, pray, is this horror play? Well, I will obviously tell you and continuously wang on about it when it's announced. But for starters, north westerners, don't make too many plans around Halloween juuuust yet…

Fancy A Banshee?

An upcoming DOCTOR WHO tale with Tom Baker that I've written has been announced - CRY OF THE BANSHEE. And it's my 'first DOCTOR WHO audio'! Except it isn't, not really. I erroneously claimed it was on BlueSky… briefly misremembering that my horror Who (on topic for this substack) THE DREAD OF NIGHT was written a whole year before. Oooooops.

More fantastic artwork from Sean Longmore!

In my defence, that New Adventures volume was made by the TORCHWOOD audio team - they're the gang who trained me up and made me the audio writer I am today. Long-term listeners of the Who audios will know there are many tribes that roam the corridors of Big Finish Towers. It's like PARADISE TOWERS but with even wilder hair.

So, BANSHEE was my first gig with a brand new duo - David Richardson and John Dorney - on an existing DOCTOR WHO range. This was back in 2019 - and I may have gone on to write one or two more audios with this terrible twosome. (One of my favourites so far? FRIEND OF THE FAMILY. Though I believe my real favourite won't come out till 2030. Stick around please.)

I was present at the studio recording of BANSHEE and it was such a joyous day. The biscuits were flowing, and at lunchtime Tom held court in the green room and told all kinds of hilarious anecdotes. I've gone on to write for Tom more than any other incarnation - you only have to meet him to realise that yes, he is still Doctor Who.

Other News...

HOOKLIGHT 1 is out next month - check out the lovely article about it from Kenny in this month's Vortex Magazine. I promise you, you are in for something special with this one.

I'm writing for the Fugitive Doctor again! Vampires ahoy...

We're approaching the Spring Equinox, and I belieeeeeve Pentabus Theatre will be re-sharing a musical micro-play I wrote from them on the subject during lockdown. Beat them to the punch and check out FOLKLORE AND FITNESS WITH CAROLE VEGAN...

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Marcel van Driel Apr 9, 2025

Liked by Tim Foley

2030 ...?! Is this hyperbole or real ...?

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2 replies by Tim Foley and others

Joumana Medlej Mar 18, 2025

Liked by Tim Foley

Feel better soon! This freezing weather isn;t helping.

I'm sorry I won't get to find out what tricks you have up your sleeves – I keep away from horror and particularly ghost stories as I would never sleep again!

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1 reply by Tim Foley

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